

Alexandra Lumiere Gottlieb

NY, NY

The Honorable Jed S. Rakoff
United States District Court Judge
Southern District of New York
Daniel Patrick Moynihan U.S. Courthouse
500 Pearl Street
New York, NY 10007-1312

May 11th, 2017

Dear Judge Rakoff,

Stefan has always been the best older brother a sister could hope for. As in many families, I had siblings that were occasionally mean to me. Even the kindest of people sometimes act cruelly to their siblings. But this was never the case with Stefan. Growing up, I can't recall a single incident when Stefan was not kind or warm. This is quite a significant reflection of the person he is.

For several years, my other brother Justin, whom I love dearly, used to terrify me wearing masks and overcoats. Stefan would often make me feel safe again.

If there were ever not enough of anything, be it three balloons or two invitations instead of four, it was usually Stefan who willingly and voluntarily did without.

Stefan has always been funny in an often, misunderstood kind of way. Misunderstood because Stefan does not egotistically or strategically think about how his words impact how others view him. Rather, Stefan speaks freely—be it upfront or in jest. I think Stefan does this in part because he lacks the strategic capacity to monitor his speech, and because he knows his intent comes from a good place. Sometimes this quality has backfired on him. For instance, when my sister Erica got engaged, Stefan's comment at the time was considered weird at best. Stefan had said something like, "well, I wouldn't have picked up a ring like that." For weeks, Stefan remained quiet about his poorly delivered comment. We were all a bit off put before learning that Stefan had—at the time—already purchased the exact same ring for a woman to whom he had wanted to propose. Ultimately, my sister felt relief that what stood behind Stefan's comment, was sarcasm. And that Stefan's true opinion was that he clearly loved the engagement ring she had received from her fiancé. Somehow, because Stefan knew his positive sentiment about my sister's ring, he lacked the capacity to see how his comment was misinterpreted.

Stefan has always been sensitive in a way that appears in contrast to his wide-shouldered stance and his love of athletics and roughhousing. After college, Stefan would often watch Lifetime, a channel that even I could not stomach for its feminine, telenovela-style dramatization. It never seemed to bother Stefan that the by-line for his favorite channel was "television for women." "It's really good," he would say. That is the sensitive brother I know.

When people would ask me what my brother did for work, I used to make some of the following statements: "Stefan works in finance, but he has a heart." "He's not like

the others." "Imagine someone with the heart of Santa Claus and the courage of Jean Claude Van Dam who happens to work in finance; that's my brother."

Growing up, Stefan was considerate. He would often say "maybe they have another reason." And even when someone acted out poorly, Stefan tended to give them the benefit of the doubt. Stefan always seemed to erroneously believe that most people acted and spoke in good faith.

Stefan is not a measured, careful speaker. Stefan does not have a great vocabulary, nor a good sense of grammar. Nor does Stefan have the faculties to consider how people interpret phrasing or how some people manipulate using word choice. Stefan speaks a bit abstractly and generally from his emotions. He always assumes people understand what he means, not necessarily what he says. This does not make for a sly person.

To watch Stefan be convicted of any crime is shocking. Never would I have imagined the remote possibility of this. Even without considering any of the facts or circumstances, this would not seem possible. And not because of cunning __because Stefan clearly lacks cunning. Stefan has always walked around in a bit of a bubble, often an incredulous bubble. Stefan generally displays integrity. Stefan genuinely cares about doing the right thing.

In fact, when faced with situations when others have behaved improperly, Stefan used to always imagine they had some unknown, benevolent reason. Stefan has always been trusting and naïve. I attribute these qualities to the fact that Stefan speaks honestly and is trustworthy.

Stefan has been such a good uncle to my daughters. They look to him and love him almost as a surrogate, part-time father. For his love of my daughters and his unwavering presence, I feel very lucky.

When I accompany Stefan places, I am aware of the assumptions others make from his physical stance and loud voice. Your honor, please consider his heart, historical character and integrity and all those that love him dearly when you consider the sentencing of my brother, one of the kindest men I've ever known.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexandra Gottlieb". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large initial 'A'.

Alexandra Lumiere Gottlieb